In Case D. 190. 719. m. 1 33 8 9/L. 29.

A Strange and Wonderful,

(Yet True)

RELATION

Of the Curſed and Helliſh Deſign of *Abraham Maſon*, a Pretended Quaker, to give himſelf to the Devil, with the manner how he would have done it; and how ſtrangely he was prevented.

Alſo an Account of his Behaviour afterwards, and of his Strange Death.

IN *Chard* in *Somerſetſhire*, there lived one *Abraham Maſon*, who being unſettled in his Religion had tried all ſorts, and ſettled himſelf at laſt amongſt the Quakers, and ſo continued; His Trade was a Bookſeller, as alſo a Confectioner, and Practitioner of Phyſick and Chirurgery; his Wife being a watchful woman, would ſearch into all his ways, ſhe hated his Religion, and would curb him for his ſottiſhneſs, in coming home drunk on the Sabbath, after his Meetings were done, which he did often,

She thus perplexing him, the Devil took opportunity to put thoſe wicked motives in his heart, which in a ſmall time took effect, for he was continually diſturbed in mind both day and night, he dayly ſeeking an opportunity to accompliſh his Devliſh Deſign. One day as he was in a profound ſtudy how he might ſee and have ſome diſcourſe with the Devil, a Gentleman came into the Shop, being diſpoſed to read ſome Book, and ſeeing the Quaker in a ſtudy, (and as he thought) troubled about ſome Affair or other, he aſked the *Quaker* the reaſon of his ſo Melancholly humour, the *Quaker* anſwered little, but finding the Gentleman to be well read, and a fit perſon to diſcover to him the methods of Raiſing the Devil, after ſome diſcourſe, diſcovered his mind to him after this manner: I have had a very great deſire, ſaith the *Quaker*, for ſome time laſt paſt, to put in Execution a Concern which I deſire thee to be very private in, and being unlearned and unskilled in the method of performing my deſign, I think it not amiſs to deſire thy aſſiſtance, and hoping thou wilt be ſecret, I will diſcover it to thee: The Gentleman taking notice of his words, conſidered with himſelf that it could be no way prejudicial to him to know this perſons deſign, promiſed him ſecretſie, knowing of him to be a perſon of a ſtrange Humour and Principles, thought he might convince him of ſomething which he deſired to be ſatisfied in, in ſome points of Religion, and ſo reſolved to give him the beſt counſel and ſatisfaction he poſſibly could, ſo told him he might freely open his mind to him, and he would aſſiſt him in any thing that lay in his power.

So the *Quaker* told him for ſome time he had a great deſire to ſee the Devil, and to diſcourſe and be converſant and familiar with him, but being ſo mean a Scholar, could of himſelf contrive no way how he might with ſecurity to himſelf, knowing the ſubtilty of the Devil, Raiſe him and Lay him again, but knowing as I ſaid before, that thou art a learned man, and underſtandeſt theſe things much better than my ſelf, and coming ſo opportunely, I think it not inconvenient to deſire thy Aſſiſtance, and therefore would have thee ſo order the matter that I may ſee the Devil. The Gentleman pondering within himſelf the meaning of his diſcourſe, not well knowing what to anſwer him, at laſt asked him his reaſon for this diſcourſe, and what he would have with the Devil, if poſſibly he could put him in a way to Raiſe him, ſo that he might ſee him, and diſcourſe him? He anſwered, He had ſomething to ſay to him, which he would never diſcover till himſelf ſaw him, and then he urged the Gentleman to Raiſe him, certainly believing as he was a Scholar he might eaſily do it. The Gentleman trying all means by perſwaſive Arguments and Scriptural Reaſons that ſuch things were not lawful to be done, yet could no ways diſwade him from his deſign; for he told him he was fully bent upon it, and if he would not aſſiſt him, he would try ſome other way. The Gentleman ſeeing him ſo obſtinate in this his Deviliſh Deſign, and that he was wholly bent to the deſtruction both of Body and Soul, promiſeth him every thing according to his deſire, and that he would when he had prepared himſelf for ſuch an Enterpriſe ſee him again, ſo left him, and went to his Brother and diſcourſed the whole buſineſs to him, who being at the firſt amazed at it, told them he would go and ſee if he could diſſwade the *Quaker* from this his Damnable Practice, but finding it in vain, the two Gentlemen contrived together that the perſon that was firſt with him ſhould keep him in the ſame ignorance as before, and try him to the utmoſt by a deluſion upon him, and making him believe that he could raiſe the Devil, & that he would perform every thing as he had promiſed him.

So the Gentleman takes him to a Neighbouring Village called *Hazelcomb*, and as they were walking together, the *Quaker* deſired to ſee the Devil; the Gentleman having Contrived the buſineſs before, ſent a man with a young Puppy and bid him lay it in a Buſh that he had formerly took notice of, which was very remarkable, they drawing near the place, the Gentleman told him that if he would faithfully promiſe him not to ſpeak he would ſhow him the Devil in the likeneſs of a young Puppy, ſo he promiſing to be ſilent, he bid him go to that Buſh and he ſhould ſee what he deſired, but if he ſpoke one word, the Devil would carry them both away; ſo he went and look'd into the Buſh, and return'd and told the Gentleman he was ſatisfied now that he could anſwer his expectation, and deſired he might ſee him in ſome other Shape, and that he might ſpeak with him, the Gentleman told him he ſhould, and that the third night after he would come to him about Eleven a Clock in the night, to take him to the place where he ſhould ſpeak with him: ſo for that time they parted, and the *Quaker* was very well ſatisfied.

The Gentleman going to his Brother, told him that

his would no ways satisfie him except he speaks to the Devil, and that he had promised to let him speak to him, and that the Devil should answer what he desired.

Therefore there must be some way or other found out to satisfie him against the time prefixed, or in all probability the Devil might Really appear to him, and then he was undone both Body and Soul. So they Consulted together that they would get two men to assist them, and act the parts of the Devil and a Fryar; that it should be at a stone *Quarry* which was not far distant from the Town, and that they would so disguise them that they should look like Devils indeed, with what Instruments they would provide for them.

He that was the supposed Devil, with a great Rug, with several Horse-tails fasthned to it, as was most convenient to make it dreadful, and on his head a Lanthorn, fasthned to a Cap, with a Hare Skin coming before his *Face*, and so tied under his *Chin*, so that the Lanthorn when he Spoak moved Forward and backward, very frightfully to the Gentleman himself.

The other like a Fryer, with Staff and Bell; and round the Pit they had scattered Gunpowder, and Brimstone, with other Ingredients, which among the dry Ferns would seem strange to any that knew not the Plot.

They having thus ordered the Business, and the time appointed being come, called upon the Quaker, and carried him to the place; though he was desirous to go a field further, but they satisfied him that place was more Convenient for the purpose; So the Gentleman made Circles, and really to the Quaker seemed as if he Conjured the Devil indeed; then from below out of the Quarry came up the smoke of Brimstone, which Smoaked them severely; then the Gentleman spoke some more words, as if he had called the Divel, which he had scarcely ended, but out of the Pit came the aforesaid Fryar, with a Bell and a Staff, and spoke in a strange note, [illegible] *who it was durst disturb his Master Belzeebub, who was busy about his Hellish Designes?* The pretended Conjurer said, *He would speak with him, therefore I Charge thee immediately Return, Return, and tell him*; who accordingly did. Then appeared the supposed Devil, and said, *What hast thou to desire of me?* then answered the Quaker, *I have for some time sought thee, and could not before see thee.* Then answered the Divel, *What is thy Business with me?*

Quaker. I would have thee grant me four Requests.

Devil. *What are they?*

Qua. First, *That thou wilt give me power over all Womens Tongues.* Secondly, *That thou wilt give me power to make sick or well whom I please.* Thirdly, *That I may Command to my Bed any Woman from the furthest part of the World.* Fourthly, *That thou wilt give me the Philosophers Stone.*

Then the Divel answered, *This is too much to give but if I grant it, What Requital shall I have from thee, O man, that desirest such difficult things from me?*

Then said the Quaker, *I who desire this of thee, will give thee my self, after such a Term of years as thou and I shall agree, and for a Token of my Reality I give thee this;* which the Conjurer bid him throw over his Left Shoulder, which accordingly he did, which was 40 *s.* in a bag, and a Letter, which Letter was supposed to be Writ with his own Blood.

Then the Conjurer bid him pull off his left Boot, and shew the Devil his foot, (for he always wore Boots) but he Refused it, then they set the Gunpowder a fire below, so that the fire was on every side; then to fright him from his Devilish Intent, they Ratled Chains which he hearing, Run away as fast as he could, the fire being so ordered, that it followed him a little way, and they had also Contrived to plant a man with a Coach-Whip, with Chains rating about him, to follow him and Whip him, which so affrighted the *Quaker*, that at once he leaped over a Stile, which at other times he could hardly scramble over, and still Run till he came to the upper end of the Town, where met him a man, who by the light of the Moon, seeing him in that frightful Condition, asked him where he had been, and what he had seen, that he looked after that manner? The *Quaker* trembling, answered him, he had seen nothing, but desired him to Return back with him from whence he came, not naming the place; but the poor man being struck with terrour, durst not go, but perswaded the *Quaker* to go to his own house, for he was certain all was not well with him, so home he went, and as he was a going to bed, his Chamber being over the Butchers Shambles, the Fellow that had the Whip and the Chains fell a Rating as if the Devil had been realy there, and Roared like a Bull, and howled like a Dog, with other frantick actions, which could not but really cause fear, which so terrified the *Quaker*, that his own Wife Reported that he so shook the bed, that she thought the Devil himself had been come for him, though she knew nothing of what had passed, but only that his debauchery (for she was jealous) and Drunkenness made her judge so hardly of him.

In the morning the Actors spent the *Quaker* 40*s.* upon a Breakfast, to laugh at his folly, to see that he should be so willing to the damning of both Body and Soul, to throw away 40*s.* upon the Devil, which he really thought to be so.

The Report of this Transaction was so spread abroad the next day, that the poor *Quaker* (whether through shame or fear, or both, I know not) was not seen in his shop of four months time. The Gentleman went to him to satisfie him how all things were carried on, but he would not believe but it was really so, and it is thought held the same opinion till his dying day, which if he had seriously considered would have been a warning to him, but at last he fell to his old course of life again, time having blotted out the shame of his former Devillish Actions, though his Wife dayly told him of his former Tricks, but nothing would work him to good; for as formerly so now he would come home drunk from his Meetings, and once more especially, for when he came home he crept up Stairs, and when he was almost at the top tumbled down again, and had been sufficated in that his debauched Condition had he not had present help, but after that he turned meer Atheist and would discourse as if there were no God, no Heaven nor Hell. But God who deals with every one according to their Deserts, made him know there was a God in Heaven, for one time as his Wife was gone to a Neighbouring Fair, he had made himself drunk with excessive drinking of Brandy; And as he was going up the Stairs, fell, or was by Devil thrown down Stairs. People coming into the Room, found him dead on the ground, and his Neck broke, so that it is to be feared that that Devil who he so much desired to see, at last when he least thought of it (God having given him the power) did meet him (except God be merciful to his Soul) to his everlasting destruction. And this was the end of that wicked Wretch who having not the fear of God before his eyes would have sold himself to the Devil. God keep and preserve us from such wicked and Ungodly Thoughts.

FINIS.

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